

What is LASIK Surgery? . . .

The most commonly performed eye surgery to correct vision problems is "laser assisted in situ keratomileusis" (LASIK). In this procedure, the doctor uses a micro cutting instrument to create a flap in the outermost layer of the cornea. The flap is folded back, and then a computer-guided laser re-shapes the surface of the cornea beneath the flap with photoablation. The flap is then replaced on the cornea. Most patients recover quickly from this procedure, often seeing much better without glasses within one to three days. As with PRK, retreatments are occasionally needed to achieve the best corrected vision. LASIK patients generally experience less post-operative discomfort.



Who Can Perform Surgeries? . . .

Ophthalmologists are eye surgeons with medical degrees who perform the surgical procedure. Optometrists are specialists in the treatment of eye and vision disorders who may participate in the care of soldiers before and after laser surgery but do not perform the surgery.

How To Apply For Surgery . . .

Visit Darnall Hospital's website at www.hood-meddac.army.mil. Click on [Appointments](#) and enter the information requested. When the screen "Type of Appointment," is shown, select Laser Eye Surgery.

This is a request for a screening appointment only. Personnel must ensure that their information in the hospital's database is correct or they may not be contacted for follow-up appointments. To verify information, visit your health clinic or Troop Medical Clinic (TMC). Reception clerks can update information immediately. Service members may also indicate the correct information in the Appointment section of the website. Just enter the correction in the Comments box below the request for a Laser Eye Surgery appointment.

Eligibility is based on unit mission, soldier MOS, and availability of appointments during unit rotation of Red Cycle.

All soldiers will require the signature of their commanding officer, O-5 or above, in order to obtain this surgery if found to be an acceptable candidate.

For more information, please call 286-7918.



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Laser Eye Surgery



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Warfighter Refractive Eye Surgery . . .

Military personnel perform their duties in a variety of operational environments that may not be the ideal situations for the wear of eyeglasses or contact lenses. For example, head gear, NBC gear, high altitude "G" forces, salt spray, night vision goggles, and sand affect the visual performance of soldiers who wear eyeglasses and contact lenses. This is a readiness issue.

For this reason, the Department of Defense has approved the Warfighter Refractive Eye Surgery Program.

Refractive eye surgery is a state-of-the-art medical resource that enhances military readiness. Corrective eye surgery that improves vision has been shown to improve a service member's confidence and effectiveness.

Because demand for the procedure far exceeds refractive eye surgery resources, the Chief of Staff of the Army directed that major unit commanders prioritize soldiers according to defined operational readiness guidelines listed in this pamphlet.

All surgical procedures involve risks and therefore it should be understood that this program is completely voluntary and no one may be coerced into having surgery due to the "needs of the service" or to fill a unit quota.

Guidelines . . .

Who is Eligible?

- Soldiers with at least 18 months remaining on active duty at the time of surgery or in conjunction with an executed reenlistment action are eligible.

- Selected personnel should have at least 12 months remaining in the same unit or similar unit and have no adverse personnel actions pending.
- Selected soldiers will be removed from the waiting list should their circumstances change causing them not to meet all the guidelines.

DoD Priorities

1. Soldiers assigned to a unit whose mission involves operations at the line of battle or behind hostile lines. Special operations and combat arms units such as Infantry, Field Artillery, and Armor battalions have first priority.
2. Combat Service Support unit personnel in present assignments in a division or separate brigade have second priority.
3. Other active duty service members when space is available.

How Major Commands Determine Priority for Eye Surgery

Priority 1. Military personnel who perform mission critical duties during combat for whom the loss or destruction of spectacles would unquestionably and unacceptably diminish their performance and the unit's capability to perform its combat mission.

Priority 2. Military personnel who perform duties not considered mission critical but whose combat duties are of such importance that were their glasses lost or destroyed their diminished performance would likely interfere with the unit's ability to perform its combat mission.

Priority 3. Personnel whose military duties do not typically expose them to extreme physical environments, but there is a reasonable expectation that the member may periodically perform duties that meet the criteria for priority 2.

Priority 4. Military personnel whose duties rarely expose them to extreme physical environments and where there is no reasonable expectation of assignment to work environments that would make spectacle use difficult.

Who is not eligible for surgery?

There is currently no plan to enroll family members or retirees in this program. Active duty service members that do not fall into one of the above categories may be considered for laser refractive surgery on a space-available basis.

What is PRK Surgery? . . .

PRK stands for Photorefractive Keratectomy. The procedure re-shapes the surface of the cornea through a process called photoablation. The surgeon removes the outer skin of the cornea, and the laser re-shapes the corneal surface. PRK is the most common procedure performed in the military because direct laser treatment of the cornea has fewer potential problems from a surgical standpoint. It generally does not limit service members' options to enroll in special operations or specialty schools. Patients generally experience marked improvement in their vision within 3-5 days, and vision steadily improves over several weeks to months with minimum side effects.